

THE MAN-ON-THE-CORNER

Extends New Year Greetings and Sentences Certain Nuisances to the Social Guillotine—Needs of the Recorder's Office—Evil of Alley Houses—Innovations

"There's a chiel among ye takin' notes."

The man-on-the-corner makes his bow anew, and wishes the readers of the Colored American, one and all, a happy new year. There are abundant reasons why every one should felicitate himself upon the returns of the day, even if his coal bin is not as full as it might be or his bank book as suggestive of "Easy street" as was true of some other years; 1903 is pregnant with possibilities, and since our careers are what we make them, it behooves us to approach the blossoming year with cheerful heart, perfect mental equipoise and clean hands—yet full-armed to do battle with the trials and tribulations that must be met and overcome to give proper zest to the victory over the devil and his works.

Let us revert to the "devil and his works," so to speak, for a moment. With no intention of opening our new chapter with maledictions or being mean, the biggest devil modern mankind is called upon to face is the chronic "knocker"—the individual who has no kind word for anybody, whose gangrened soul looks out upon the world through darkened glasses and who gloats with ghoulish glee over the downfall of his brother. He sneers at the purity of womanhood; he denounces the high-purposed minister as a consummate hypocrite; he rails at society because it bars him; he discredits every form of Negro enterprise from the bank to the paripatetic huckster; he says there is nothing in Negro newspapers and has no confidence in race leaders; he pronounces educational systems monumental failures and political parties the breeding centre of fakirs. In a word the "knocker" is out of joint with the times, and he militates against the happiness of his contemporaries by being constantly and forever in evidence. He is, at the altar rail taking communion, at the banquet table, at the bar, in the school house, in the editorial chair, in the conference, on the cars, in the family circle, and even in the chamber of death, when the last sad offices are being performed by loving and tender hands the malevolent presence of the "knocker" does not fail to obtrude itself. Cannot something be done during the year of grace 1903 to "cut the claws" of this monster?

Next to the aforesaid species of the genus homo suppose we place the "tattler." This pestiferous character comes in both genders—male and female, and it is only a matter of taste or experience which may be predominated the greater evil. Their mischievous repetition of the most casual conversation carries evil where no evil is intended. They leer significantly when describing to the husband some trivial action of the wife, or act as if "more and worse" could be told when they sneak around and pour insidious poison into the ears of the gullible and confiding wife. Though particeps criminis in some clandestine affair, the tattler gives the secret away, but places himself in the attitude of being the virtuous one of the party, deploring the disgraceful lapse of his comrades, either as to loose morals or inebriety. The tattler's sphere of influence is wide and his results are deep and far reaching because of the universal tendency to believe the unfavorable side of a story, the scavenger like taste for prurient scandal, and the fact that this unspeakable leper is always sure of his statements, while the friend who ought to rally bravely to the defense is doubtful of his ground and shrinks like a craven before the simoom of an adverse public sentiment. During 1903 let honest men and women refrain from entering the ranks of the tattlers, and refuse countenance to the pesky lot whether they smile as engagingly as Mephistopheles upon the street corner, or hob-nob in the effete purloins of Quality Row.

A few other fiends who need to be gibbeted upon the forum of popular contempt during the New Year are the anonymous letter writing assassins, the seil-out politician, the lick-spittles of official

life, the journalistic sharks, the ministerial montebank, the Negro woman who accepts concubinage with whitemen, the antediluvian fossils who retard race progress with their fogysm, and the professional flim-flammers who turn a dishonest penny by maligning the race in quarters where irreparable injury can be done to the whole people. Keep your eye upon the gentry here delineated, friends; smite them hip and thigh at every opportunity and a better world to live in will be the reward of your labors.

As Bishop Abram Grant passed the New Willard last Monday on his way to the White House, his massive form attracted the attention of two Caucasian gentlemen standing in front of the cafe entrance.

"Who is that fine-looking colored man?" asked one.

"Why, don't you know him? That's Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee, the industrial educator."

"How do you 'get next' so readily?" asked the first speaker incredulously.

"Dead easy. That's the biggest Negro I ever saw, and it is a sure thing he must be Booker Washington."

One word more about the office of the Recorder of Deeds. Public-spirited Washingtonians should take a deeper personal interest in looking after the needs of this important office. It should be the vital concern of every property owner and of every individual who finds it necessary to place a paper of any kind on a permanent file. The land records, bills of sale and incorporations touch the business life of this community at every point. There are old books dating back perhaps one hundred years that have become worn-out and the writing is scarcely legible under the strongest glass. These should by all means be recopied in up-to-date style. Complications of the direst kind may result should these records be neglected until absolutely unfit for use and large interests may be affected. New shelving is required for the ledgers now on hand, and constantly increasing. Modern furniture should be supplied from the front office to the copyists' quarters. The Recorder should be granted a private secretary, and the general force should be reorganized and placed on a salary, or given continuous employment by the piece. If this is inexpedient the inequality might be adjusted by according the copyists one-half the price of the papers they transcribe, instead of the one-third they now receive. Mr. Dancy can and will make his office the model government establishment of the capital if Congress will only come to his rescue with a suitable appropriation and amendments to the present law. The Recorder's office is entitled to as decent treatment as its companion-piece, the office of the Register of Wills, and the citizens of the District, through the newspapers and organizations, should take the matter up and push vigorously for better things.

President Roosevelt's message gave a forcible and proper jab at the alley houses of Washington. They are a disgrace to the official headquarters of a wealthy government like ours. They are a shameful monument to the selfishness and cupidity of a set of property-owners who can realize larger profits from exorbitant rents for tumble-down shanties and rookeries off from the main highways, than from the costlier modern flat. These houses, hidden back in noisome alleys, crowded with human beings of every age and condition, are unsanitary and are a standing menace to the health, moral and physical, of the entire city. They breed both disease and vice. The mortality among children is something awful and the demoralizing habits of life among the adults are calculated to dishearten the most optimistic missionary. Mr. Weller, secretary of the Associated Charities of the District, is doing a grand work in calling attention to these dens, and since most of them are occupied by Negroes our people should bestir themselves to have these neighborhoods cleaned out and sanitary tenements provided for the poor at moderate rentals.

The commissioners should rise in their might and remove these pestholes by condemnation proceedings. I call upon the splendid colored women of the District to take this work in hand even more energetically than they have done in the past, and spread among these backward elements the beneficent influence of the "social settlement" idea so admirably exemplified by "Hull House," Chicago, and on a more modern scale by our own "Neighborhood House" in South Washington. The start among us on M street, southwest, is a step in the right direction, and should be sustained by those of means and influence. Who will be the Jane Addams of the District of Columbia? She should by all means come from the race which more strongly than any other needs the love, sympathy and substantial aid that the "Lady of Hull House" gives in such generous measure to the unfortunates within her reach.

INNOVATIONS.

"The man on the Corner" is "wid you" again.

Prof. L. M. Hershaw looks nice in his "long suit."

Dr. E. D. Williston's new horse sets a lively pace.

Dr. C. Sumner Wormley has an elegant new laboratory.

Capt. D. J. Gilmer has appeared in a brand-new suit.

Dr. Paul J. Mischeaux is succeeding in the practice of medicine.

"Dr." Berkeley C. W. Waller will hang out his shingle here next year.

Mr. Albert J. Farley, of the court house is "out of politics" for gold.

J. Cubert Campbell may be induced to repeat his famous Charleston speech.

James W. Muse is still kicking and Col. W. L. Houston smiles complacently.

Mr. L. C. Moore's lyceum which met at Mt. Carmel Baptist church, is no more.

The clerks at the Pension office have commenced to earn their monthly stipend.

New official material continues to come like young Lochivar "up from the west."

W. T. Menard is pouring some "hot shot" into the columns of the Trades Unionist.

Lawyer Reuben S. Smith would not decline an appointment as judge of the police court.

Col. Robert Harlan has loaded up with a stock of fresh jokes to meet the new year's demand.

Mr. J. William Cole is wielding a trenchant pen upon the staff of the Colored American.

Bishop Walters is minus his characteristic Vandyke, and his friends say he looks fifteen years younger.

Pierce Place now has but one editor to the block, thus relieving the journalistic congestion previously existing.

The myriad of fellows "whose money is tied up in the suspended bank" are still "standing off" their creditors.

The initiation fee of the Pen and Pencil Club will be reduced if L. M. Hershaw's amendment goes through.

F. D. McCracken's "whirlwind oratory" will be a feature in the coming discussions at the Second Baptist Lyceum.

Dr. L. H. Harris shipped another big consignment of his famous Blood Tonic to an Atlanta pharmacist this week.

Lawyer J. W. Patterson is wearing the same sized hat, notwithstanding his great victory in the Cole-Dennis case.

Since assuming the office of Recorder of Deeds, Hon. John C. Dancy has developed more than a dozen new gray hairs.

There is room upon the farms in Maryland and Virginia for those who cannot find places in the government service.

William T. Smith (Smitty) our popular undertaker, has a new overcoat that would do your heart good to gaze upon.

Dr. Albert Ridgeley's handsome countenance is as radiant as a morning glory because of a healthy increase in his practice.

And so the M. E. Church is to have an inn—that is if Rev. Ernest Lyon is to land the Liberian Mission, as has been given out.

Lawyer W. C. Martin is an authority on biblical history, and can give our ablest orthodox theologians a sharp "run for their money."

Quite a number of our progressive young men are solving the problem of how to make a living outside of the executive departments.

There are some Howard University men who do not air their learning in loud tones in public places, with the view of paralyzing the groundlings.

Several new names have been posted lately at the Metropole Club for delinquency—and each and every mother's son of them draws a good salary.

The fact that Lieut. Frank Cheek goes on "guard duty" three nights a week now instead of two has set his friends to wondering "when it will happen."

A striking resemblance has been detected between Judge Robert H. Terrell and the Rev. Hutchens C. Bishop, rector of St. Phillips' P. E. church, New York.

There is probably no truth in the rumor that Recorder Dancy may find it necessary to advertise for applicants whenever a vacancy happens upon his clerical staff.

The lady who mistook Mr. "Mont" Bruce for Col. Daniel Lawson Brooks in Judiciary Square the other day will please send her address to the office of the Recorder of Deeds.

The sunny presence of John H. Wills was missed by his comrades during Yuletide. It is hoped that his Adonis-like form will soon adorn the classic precincts of "the literary shop," as of yore.

When you hear a disturbance some evening in your travels don't worry. It may be a revival, a Masonic election, a business meeting of the Pen and Pencil Club or an executive session of the stockholders and depositors of the Capital Savings Bank.

Rev. Geo. W. Lee's impartial services in the chair at the meetings of the stockholders and depositors of the Capital Savings Bank stamps him as a presiding officer of the first water. Had he started out as a Methodist he would have been a Bishop long ago.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good," is an old adage that is aptly exemplified by the harvest that is being reaped by the lawyers, each of whom has found one or more clients among the depositors of the Capital Savings Bank. Whatever the outcome they will "get theirs."

When you see a young fellow these days looking careworn about the eyes and a trifle emaciated don't make it a "bet" that he is one of the boarders who has been experimented upon by Prof. Wiley's boric foods. He is probably one of those folks who "swore off" on New Year's and is wearing out his solid flesh trying to live up to his vow.

THE MAN IN THE CORNER.

THE THIRD WEEK REPORT.

The report of the Third National Convention of the National Negro Business League, which was held in Richmond, Va., last August, is just from the press. It was arranged by Mr. S. Laning Williams, the compiler of Chicago, Ill. Of the three reports made this last one is the most complete. The table of contents are: Photograph of Booker T. Washington, pictures of the offices of the League, officers of the Executive Committee and Life Members, The Convention, annual address by Booker T. Washington, the official program, minutes of the proceedings, addresses, reports from business centres, summary of reports, resolutions and communications, list of delegates.

It should be in the hands of not only every member of the League, but every Negro in the United States, who is engaged in business. It is replete with good things, and contains one hundred and thirty pages. Send 25 cents to Mr. S. Laning Williams, 113 Adams St., Chicago, Ill., and procure a copy.

THE PE-RU-NA ALMANAC.

The druggists have already been supplied with Peruna almanacs. There is sure to be a great demand for these almanacs on account of the articles on astrology which they contain. The subject of astrology is a very attractive one to most people. The articles on astrology in the Peruna almanac have been furnished by a very competent astrologist, and the mental characteristics of each sign is given, constituting almost a complete horoscope. A list of questions and answers on astrology sent free upon request. There will be a great rush for these books. Ask your druggist for one early before they are all gone.